

TOWN OF UNION

December Newsletter 2014

KEEP INFORMED: If you are getting this then you already know about our list serve sign-ups found on our web site at www.union.maine.gov, well you can now find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/townofunion. It is always a risk to use an interactive site like Facebook but I have faith it will stay civil and if not I have the power of blocking those who use it for other purposes.

Our printed and mailed newsletters will come only twice a year now, once with the tax bills and again with the town report. Tell your friends and neighbors to get on Facebook and you will have all the latest up to the minute updates on cancellations, important news etc.

IT'S WINTER! Well some form of winter anyway. We have had record highs, lows and snowfall in the month of November! Oh yes, record expense in the PW department too! We are about 18% ahead in expenses as compared to last year, as mother nature usually does it should all even out by the end of the year.

And speaking of Public Works, finally the sand and salt building is finished! Months late due to contractors and engineers, but finally finished as of December 9th. For those of you who wanted to come in and watch construction I am sorry we asked you to leave, but as the general contractor we were required to make this a construction zone and not let anyone in the area.

SAND OR SALT? Although it has been years since we allowed citizens to have sand or salt we still get the question. The stern answer is **no!** The reasons are many but basically State law says it is illegal to use public funds for private services, (yes some towns do it) but more importantly is the fact that our facility is quite small and safety of citizens is very important. A pile of sand or salt can fall at any moment and would result in immediate injury or death.

INVOLVEMENT: We are often looking for volunteers for various committees, appeals board, planning board, recreation and more. If you are interested please contact me at jayunion@roadrunner.com. Many of these committees are vital to our town and how we will operate in the future, I would love to see some younger citizens get more involved, not just on boards or committees but with ideas of events or items of interest.

BUDGETS: Well we just finished a November election and regardless of your personal choices the voters have spoken. In Union we are fortunate to have two independent representatives and a State Senator to express our views in Augusta. We expect the Governor to recommend all revenue sharing be taken and spent in Augusta. We should be receiving around \$216,000 but will see only \$90,000 this year. It will very important for you to contact all representatives and fight for your money this year, you are paying income and sales taxes every day and by law 5% is to come back to your municipality, it is really that simple.

You will hear lots of spin over this during the coming months about how Augusta can't afford it, or the money is not there. The only way it is not there is someone is taking it because I know I still pay sales and income taxes every week!

Property tax increase are a direct result of Revenue Sharing being taken from your pockets, if we can secure full funding of 5% you will see property taxes reduced.

A bit more on budgets: if you are wondering how we go through the process I invite you to come to our Selectmen's meetings starting in March (dates will be on web site and Facebook notices!) and see how things work.

ROADS: First a big thanks to the person or persons who dropped off a bunch of goodies to the Public Works crew recently. When they are out all night they love to see goodies to keep them going, simply drop them off at the garage or call and they might even be able to stop on their way by to pick it up!

With this weather the dirt roads are taking a beating and I know there are potholes and ruts forming. As a reminder we do not grade during the winter as it usually creates mud and large chunks to run in to. As I am writing this it is raining on our ice covered dirt roads and the phone will ring that we have not sanded the dirt roads. We could have sanded it 5 minutes earlier and you would never know it as it immediately rains off wasting time and money.

One thing you can do to help the dirt roads when they soften up is not to make multiple trips back and forth over the soft spots. We counted one vocal resident come in and out 6 times in about 1.5 hours one morning, let's all work together and try not make the problem worse.

WINTER CLOSINGS: When the weather gets bad we do not want to encourage people to be out driving in major snowstorms and we also want our employees to get home safely. There are times the office may close early, open late or not open at all, we will have this on channel 6 and 8, on village soup and yes on www.facebook.com/townofunion.

PLOW TRUCKS AND YOU: It could be that I am getting older but it sure seems like people are driving much faster during storms. Maybe it is the all-wheel drive vehicles that give them confidence but no matter the reason it is important to be aware of plow trucks, because when a Subaru and a truck with a plow and wing meet it is not pretty.

When we sit down after a storm and go over safety issues two things always come up, vehicles passing plows or coming toward them at a high rate of speed in the middle of the road and vehicles driving in the blind area behind the trucks. The latter is especially true at intersections, if you can't see their mirrors they can't see you and backing into your vehicle really hurts the wax job.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS: The Board of Selectmen and the entire staff want to wish you all a great holiday season.

Hours: Closed December 25 & 26, and January 1.